

Internal cop probe seeks answers

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investigation

NORTH BRUNSWICK — When two township patrolmen responded early Saturday morning to an alarm at North Brunswick Township High School, they found nothing wrong after a visual exterior inspection of the building. More than three hours later, however, the school janitor discovered evidence of widespread vandalism there — about \$60,000 in damages.

Did vandals trip the alarm that sounded at 3:55 a.m. Saturday? If so, why didn't the patrolmen uncover evidence of the misdeed?

Usually, police immediately notify school authorities after an alarm goes off so it can be reset. However, the school officials were not told about the alarm, police and school administrators seem to agree. Why?

These questions, emerging in the wake of the vandalism spree at the high school, are being examined by police in an internal investigation that should conclude today, said Deputy Chief George Magyar.

Magyar said police want to determine if "proper procedures" were followed by the officers involved and if not, why.

Two 16-year-olds, not identified by authorities because of their age, are lodged in the county Youth Detention Center following their arrest Monday on charges of burglary and criminal mischief. Both boys confessed to breaking into and vandalizing the school, police said.

The damage included 120 windows broken, 50 fire extinguishers emptied, a trophy case smashed and three offices ransacked.

"We don't have the final outcome" of the investigation, Magyar said yesterday. "There are

two main points. Did the police do a thorough job of checking the building to see if there was a break-in following the alarm? And the second point concerns the question of notification."

Magyar said it is standard procedure that police notify school officials immediately after an alarm is sounded, but apparently that didn't happen Saturday morning. At 7:40 a.m., the school janitor discovered the vandalism, more than three hours after two patrolmen checked the school when the alarm sounded.

Police said the officers, who have not been identified, found everything to be secure after making a visual exterior inspection of the building. They then left the scene.

The Township Committee and Board of Education members discussed the situation and reviewed procedures regarding the alarm last Monday night.